CLAIMS

Sub E1

1. A method for identifying a substance capable of affecting a viral infection, which method comprises:

(a) providing a lipid globule targeting sequence, as a first component;

(b) providing a lipid globule, as a second component;

(c) contacting the two components with a substance to be tested under conditions that would permit the two components to interact in the absence of the substance; and

(d) determining whether the substance disrupts the interaction between the first and second components;

wherein the targeting sequence comprises a hepatitis C virus (HCV) core protein or a fragment, derivative, variant or homologue thereof.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the substance to be tested is administered to a cell, the lipid globule targeting sequence is expressed in said cell and the lipid globule is a natural constituent of said cell.

Sub A1

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2 further comprising:

(e) administering a virus to a cell in the absence of a said substance which has been determined to disrupt the interaction between the first and second components;

(f) administering the virus to the cell in the presence of the said substance; and

(g) determining if the said substance reduces or abolishes the susceptibility of the cell to viral infection or the effects of viral infection.

4. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein the lipid globule targeting sequence comprises amino acids from 125 to 144 and/or 161 to 166 of the HCV core protein.

5. A method for identifying a substance for treating or preventing a viral infection, which method comprises determining whether said substance can upregulate expression of adipocyte-specific differentiation related protein (ADRP) in a mammalian cell.

6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein the viral infection is a hepatitis infection or other viral infection of the human or animal liver.

7. A method according to any one of claims 2 to 6 wherein said cell is a liver cell.

8. A substance identified by the method of any one of the preceding claims.

9. A substance according to claim 7 wherein the substance has not previously been known to affect viral infection.

10. A substance capable of disrupting an interaction between (i) a lipid globule targeting sequence and (ii) a lipid globule for use in affecting a viral infection, wherein the targeting sequence comprises a hepatitis C virus (HCV) core protein or a fragment, derivative, variant or homologue thereof.

11. A protein comprising a lipid globule targeting sequence for use in preventing or treating a viral infection wherein the targeting sequence comprises an HCV core protein or a fragment, derivative, variant or homologue thereof

12. A protein according to claim 11 wherein the targeting sequence comprises amino acids from 125 to 144 and/or 161 to 166 of the HCV core protein.

13. A polynucleotide encoding a protein according to claim 11 or 12 sequence for use in affecting a viral infection.

14. Use of a protein according to claim 11 or 12, or a polynucleotide according to claim 13 in the manufacture of a medicament for use in affecting a viral infection

Sub A3

15. Use of a substance in the manufacture of a medicament for use in affecting a viral infection, wherein the substance has been identified by the method of any one of claims 1 to 7.

16. Use of a substance in the manufacture of a medicament for use in affecting a viral infection wherein said substance can upregulate expression of ADRP in a mammalian cell.

ADD A4

ADD E6